

JOSEPH SLOPER - FACT AND FICTION.

by Roy Everett.

Does any member know the truth of this creator of the perfin ?

Peter Collins in "The Philatelist Sep/Oct 1966" is personally unclear as to Sloper's activities, "House decorator and an engineer". Others mention 'itinerant tinker', 'builder', and Vallencey writes in 1948, "The original firm of Joseph Sloper was established in 1836. Mr. Sloper died some 43 years ago (1903), and the business was continued by his son, and is now a private listed company". He adds that it 'could appear' that Slopers contacts with the Post Office and Inland Revenue before 1867 were established.

Did he print their forms, paint their pillar boxes, build their offices, mend their pots and pans, or what ?

The letter of 29th March 1869 from the P.O. (R. Parkhurst) to the overprinting lobbyist Messrs. Joseph Travers and Sons gives Sloper's address Wallbrook House, Wallbrook, hardly the residence of a 'tinker' !

So what is the truth of Sloper's former relationship with the Establishment ?

Now to the authorisation of perfins - reference by Vallencey to the letter from R. Parkhurst of 13th March 1868 on behalf of the Postmaster General, His Grace the Duke of Montrose, seems to indicate the course of events. But I've been told of a perfin on piece bearing a postmark of 1867.

Now I cannot illustrate this as it is not mine. It is in the hands of a Collector who wanted to sell it to a member of the Perfin Society. The best advice I could give was to get the item authenticated by a postal historian for the postmark and stamp for the perfin.

Obviously if it was with a die that is not within the first few listed in Sloper's 'big book' of the 'earliest arranged in order of receipt of instructions', hopefully Vallency did record more than he put in his slim volume of 1948, severe doubt would exist as to the items authenticity.

What is the earliest postmarked perfin in hands of Society Members ?

Anyone with answers or interesting observations should direct their letter to the Bulletin Editor, for forwarding so that a conclusive article may be prepared for later publication in the Bulletin.
